

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 01869 310851Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05
/093 W

-----010449Z 085303 /14

R 310717Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4192
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 1869

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UN, SF, DA
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTIONS AT NORDIC COUNCIL
MEETING

REFS: (A) DAR ES SALAAM 1051, (B) REYKJAVIK 404

1. DANISH MFA OFFICIAL, NIELS HELSKOV, IN CHARGE OF
AFRICAN AFFAIRS AND ONE OF COMMUNIQUE DRAFTERS AT
REYKJAVIK, EXPLAINED BACKGROUND OF NORDIC MINISTERS'
DISCUSSION ON SOUTH AFRICA TO DCM.

2. HELSKOV SAID THAT PRIOR TO MEETING NORDIC
MINISTERS HAD ALL BEEN APPROACHED BY UK ASKING THEM
TO REFRAIN FROM ENDORSING MANDATORY SANCTIONS
AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. THERE ENSUED A
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LONG AND TEDIOUS DISCUSSION IN WHICH NORDIC MINISTERS,
TORN BETWEEN TAKING A STRONG STAND ON SANCTIONS FOR
THE BENEFIT OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS AT HOME AND WISHING
NOT TO IGNORE COMPLETELY THE UK DEMARCHE, COULD
NOT MAKE UP THEIR MINDS. THEREFORE, THE COMPROMISE
WAS TO PUT THE ONUS ON THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL.
THE EXACT COMMUNIQUE LANGAUGE THAT RESULTED WAS,

"A DECISION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON A MANDATORY ARMS EMBARGO WOULD BE WELCOMED." APPARENTLY SOME DELEGATIONS, AND PARTICULARLY THE SWEDES, FELT THAT MANDATORY SANCTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST ALL COUNTRIES SELLING ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA. THIS WAS THE PART TO WHICH THE UK OBJECTED MOST STRONGLY, BUT IT WAS CLEAR TO THE MINISTERS THAT THE GERMANS AND FRENCH WOULD ALSO HAVE BEEN VERY UNHAPPY WITH SUCH LANGUAGE.

3. THE SECOND DISCUSSION INVOLVING SOUTH AFRICA CONCERNED THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENTS. AGAIN, THE SWEDES PRESSED FOR THE CESSATION OF ALL FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE OTHER DELEGATIONS DEMURRED. FINALLY, A COMPROMISE WAS REACHED IN WHICH THE SECURITY COUNCIL WAS ASKED TO TAKE DECISIONS TO "PREVENT NEW FOREIGN INVESTMENTS."

4. FINALLY, HELSKOV RECALLED THAT LAST YEAR THE NORDIC COUNCIL HAD SUPPORTED A BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICAN GOODS. THIS YEAR, MOST DELEGATIONS FELT SUCH WORDING WAS TOO STRONG. THE COMPROMISE PHRASEOLOGY, THEREFORE, WAS AS FOLLOWS: "APPRECIATION AND SUPPORT WAS (SIC) EXPRESSED FOR THE WORK OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS IN STIMULATING PUBLIC OPINION ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA." HELSKOV NOTED, WITH A SMILE, THAT "STIMULATING PUBLIC OPINION" WAS A FAR CRY FROM ENDORSING A BOYCOTT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, MEETINGS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, SANCTIONS, EMBARGOES, UNSC RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COPENH01869
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770111-0729
Format: TEL
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977034/aaaaacze.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f4b5d4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 DAR ES SALAAM 1051, 77 REYKJAVIK 404
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3049301
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DISCUSSION OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTIONS AT NORDIC COUNCIL MEETING
TAGS: PFOR, SF, DA, UN, (HELKOV, NIELS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f4b5d4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009